(xiii) Expenses of Election Commission to be treated as 'Charged';

(xiv) Ban on transfers of the Election Officers on the eve of elections;

(xv) All officials appointed in connection with conduct of election to be included in clause (7) of section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951;

(xvi) Anti-defection law;

(xvii) Use of common electoral rolls at elections conducted by the Election Commission and State Election Commission;

(xviii) Simplification of procedure for disqualification of a person found guilty of corrupt practice;

(xix) Same number of proposers for all contesting candidates;

(xx) Making of false declaration in connection with election to be an offence;

(xxi) Rule making authority to be vested in Election Commission; and

(xxii) Registration and de-registration of political parties.

While these propsals were under examination of the Government, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha referred the subject of electoral reforms to the Department-Related-Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice for examination and report. The recommendations of the Committee are awaited before the Government could take any action.

Steps for clearing pending cases

33. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to appoint more judges in the High Courts to facilitate clearing of pending cases;

(b) if so, the total number of judges likely to be appointed;

(c) the details of computerisation of subordinate courts, if any, planned by Government;

(d) whether any assessment of functioning of Fast Task Courts have been made; and

(e) *if so, the details thereof?*

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Pursuant to the Supreme Court Judgement of October 6, 1993 read with their Advisory Opinion of October 28, 1998, the process of initiation of propsal for appointment of Judges in the High Courts lies with the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court. The Government has, however, been requesting the Chief Justices of the High Courts, Chief Ministers and the Governors of the States, from time to time, to initiate proposals for filling up of the present and anticipated vacancies during the next six months. In response to these efforts, as on 14.7.2006, against a sanctioned strength of 678, there were 588 Judges in position in the High Courts leaving 90 vacancies to be filled up.

(c) A Scheme for computerization of the Judiciary which would cover about 15000 District and Subordinate Courts in the Country has since been approved. The Scheme is being implemented by the National Informatic Centre (NIC) under the overall guidance of E-Committee headed by a retired High Court Judge.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) As per the information available with the Department of Justice, the Fast Track courts have disposed of 10.09 lakh cases out of 17.78 lakh cases transferred to them.

Production of iron ore

†34. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that iron ore is produced in the country in public sector as well as the private sector;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.